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John 3:5, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit." A recent discussion of this text, in England, resulted in the general conclusion that water baptism was meant, and the Spirit was the Holy Spirit; that baptism, however, was not asserted to be essential to regeneration, the only absolutely essential element being the presence and working of the Holy Spirit of God. The desire of the writers was to remove the word "water," or at least minimize its importance. The *Expository Times* now cites a new interpretation, that given by Rev. Jas. Neil in a little book upon "Figurative Language in the Bible." Mr. Neil believes that the phrase is an instance of the figure of speech called *hendiadys*, whereby one qualified subject is expressed as two separate subjects: the qualifying adjective is for emphasis turned into a separate substantive. It is a characteristic of the Eastern languages, and appears not infrequently in the Bible (e. g., Dan. 8:10; Acts 14:13; 2 Tim. 1:10; Jno. 14:6). In this passage, therefore, it means "except a man be born of *spiritual* water, with a strong emphasis upon the word "spiritual." And shortly afterward in the same Gospel the meaning of "spiritual water" is shown (Jno. 7: 37-39.) A similar figure is used by Virgil when he says, "we pour out a libation from bowls and gold," by which he means "from *golden* bowls." The figurative language of the Bible is at present one of the most fertile and interesting fields for study, and promises much fruit toward the exact understanding of many obscure passages.

The Serpent of Gen. iii. Prof. Ryle, of Cambridge, writing in the *Expository Times* upon the "Story of Paradise," says that the serpent constantly appears in the early legends of primitive races—Persians, Greeks, Babylonians. We can hardly question that the mention of the serpent, in the original form of the Hebrew legend, occupied a more prominent position than it does in Genesis, from which the Hebrew writers, imbued with the pure faith of Jehovah, have vigorously excluded whatsoever was associated with the taint of idolatry, of degrading superstition, or of unedifying expansion. The serpent in our narrative supplies the external motive to sin: God tempted not to sin, nor was man created sinful. But as to the origin of the external motive supplied by the serpent, Genesis is silent. It cannot be asserted that the personality of the spirit of evil is here taught. Our conception of this comes less from the narrative itself than from Milton's description in *Paradise Lost*. The narrative emphasizes the subtle character, not what we should call the Satanic origin, of the temptation. A significant verse is Gen. 3:15, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman," etc. Its merely literal explanation does not exhaust its meaning. The underlying thought is that of a spiritual conflict between the race of man and the influences of temptation, between humanity with its gift of choice and the principle of evil which ever suggests the satisfaction of the lower desires. Ultimate victory is assured, but the process is not explained. Both Jewish and Christian interpretation have given to the promise the significance of a Messianic prediction. Many found in it the prediction of a personal Messiah; but Calvin, and the Reformers generally, explained the words in a more general sense, regarding the "seed of the woman" as the descendants of the first woman from among whom, according to the flesh, the Messiah should come. Interpreting them in the light of the immediate context, we cannot say that the Hebrew writer foresaw their fulfillment in any one individual; and yet we cannot fail to see, in the light of the New Testament, the appropriateness of the language used to their ultimate verification (e. g., Rom. 5: 12-21; 16: 20).